

Lying & Obeying

Acts Chapter 5

Act 5:1 **1) Lying to God** vs 1-11

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property,

Act 5:2 and kept back {some} of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, **he laid it at the apostles' feet.**

- This chapter begins with the word "But" This conjunction contrasts the previous thought with this one.
- The Previous Barnabas (Son of Encouragement) selling land and laying it at the apostles' feet. Barnabas being an encourager his motivation was building up, meeting other's needs.
- Ananias (Jehovah has graciously given) and Sapphira (sapphire or beauty) has done the same thing with one exception. **THEY KEPT BACK SOME FOR HIMSELF.**
- Kept back = (nosphizo) to pilfer, to embezzle Used 3 times in New Testament 2 x in this story and once in Titus 2:10 speaking of servants not pilfering/embezzling from their masters.
- Hypocrisy is directly assaulting the church at a time when the church is highly effective and ministry is building momentum.
- Old Testament example: Achan at Ai Joshua 6+7 Hypocrisy assaulting the victorious momentum.
 - Joshua 6:17-19 "And the city shall be accursed, [even] it, and all that [are] therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that [are] with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And ye, in any wise keep [yourselves] from the accursed thing, lest ye make [yourselves] accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, [are] consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD."
 - A) The Lord was clear in proper practice concerning the spoils of war.
 - B) There are banned things
 - C) Silver and Gold go to the Lord's Treasury
 - Joshua 7:1 "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel."
 - A) The Lord knows trespass even if no one else knows
 - B) One man's sin affected the others even when they didn't know of the sin.
 - Joshua 7:2-10 Israel goes into a battle and a small opposition 36 to 3000. The 36 of Ai defeated Israel. Joshua goes before the Lord in prayer.
 - Joshua 7:11-22 The Lord tells Joshua about the banned item in someone's tent. And through an incredible process Achan is revealed to Joshua. And Achan confesses. Messengers run to Achan's tent and find the banned silver.
 - Joshua 7:23-26 "Why hast thou troubled us? The LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger." Joshua and all Israel took Achan, his wife, sons, daughters, possessions, goods, cattle and stoned them and burned them.
- (FF Bruce said) "The story of Ananias is to the Book of Acts what the story of Achan is to the book of Joshua. In both narratives an act of deceit interrupts the victorious progress of the people of God."
- Calvin lists the depravity of this hypocrisy:
 - The contempt of God
 - sacrilegious defrauding
 - perverse vanity and ambition
 - lack of faith
 - the corrupting of a good and holy order

Note that hypocrisy was in the beginning of the church. We still have the problem today. Don't be surprised. And don't be surprised when God deals with it.

- Jesus used the strongest of language against hypocrites.
- Read Matthew 23 to see just what He thinks of hypocrisy.

Act 5:3 **But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back {some} of the price of the land?"**

- Satan filled your heart - The enemy will attack the work of God with persecution from without. Satan will also attack the church from within.
- What makes this so hideous is that the church is an open, giving, confessing, vulnerable entity. It is left open to manipulators and those that would take advantage. Here we have an incredible generosity and selfless serving of others. This deception is the kind of sin that will cause even the righteous to draw back their charity.
- Lied to the Holy Spirit. (see verse 4)

Act 5:4 "While it remained {unsold,} did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

- Peter is telling Ananias that this was never a mandatory giving program. If he wanted to hold back some of the proceeds of the sale that was fine. If he wanted to keep the majority that would have been fine.
- It was in his control (prerogative) to do so.
- Giving to the Church should be done CHEERFULLY.
 - 2 Corinthians 9:7 "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, [so let him give]; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."
 - Not grudgingly or of necessity.
 - CHEERFULLY
- Giving to the Church should be done in SECRET
 - Matthew 6:1-4 "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest [thine] alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly."
 - We need to take care to see that this is done: in secret.
- Giving to the Church should be done REGULARLY.
 - 1 Corinthians 16:2 "Upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as [God] hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."
 - 1 day of the week
- Giving to the Church should be done AS YOU ARE PROSPERED
 - 1 Corinthians 16:2 "Upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as [God] hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."
 - As God has prospered him.
- Giving to the Church should be done WILLINGLY - WITH WHAT YOU HAVE
 - 2 Corinthians 8:12-13 "For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have. Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality."
 - If the willingness is there.
 - According to what you have.
- Giving to the Church should be done BOUNTIFULLY
 - 2 Corinthians 9:5,6,7 "Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as [a matter of] bounty (blessing), and not as [of] covetousness. But this [I say], He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, [so let him give];..."
 - Prepared beforehand
 - Bountifully = liberal or abundant But remember as you have been prospered and with what you have.
- Lying to God verse three Peter said Ananias lied to the Holy Ghost. Here he says God. The concept of the Trinity is in the heart of these apostles as they speak of God and Holy Spirit interchangeably.

Act 5:5 And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it.

- It is very important to note that Peter did not pronounce a death sentence upon Ananias.

Act 5:6 The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

3 HOURS LATER

- Act 5:7 Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.
- Act 5:8 And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price."
- Peter gives Sapphira ample time to repent.
 - A white lie. That is what they sold the land for. (that plus a little more.) Technically she didn't lie. That is what a white lie is. It is truth with some information missing, which if presented in full detail a different message, would be perceived.
 - Those who think it's permissible to tell white lies soon become color-blind.
Austin O'Malley.
 - A Lying seems to be a way of life for many people. We lie at the drop of a hat. The book The Day American Told the Truth says that:
 - 91 percent of those surveyed lie routinely about matters they consider trivial
 - 36 percent lie about important matters; 86 percent lie regularly to parents
 - 75 percent to friends
 - 73 percent to siblings
 - 69 percent to spouses.*Daily Bread, August 28, 1992.*
- Act 5:9 Then Peter {said} to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out {as well.}"
- In verse 3 Peter said they had lied to the Holy Spirit. In Verse 4 he said they had lied to God, tying 2 of the 3 persons of the Trinity together. Here Peter tells Sapphira that they agreed against the Spirit of the LORD.
 - LORD (kyrios) - 667 times in the New Testament referring to the Messiah Jesus. Thus this passage presents the Trinity.
- Act 5:10 And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.
- Act 5:11 And **great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.**
- This is the 2nd time this statement is presented in this passage. This is the purpose of God in this quick judgment.
 - What is our greatest fear? Is it fear of breaking God's commandment? "Thou Shalt Not Lie" The wages of sin is death. Why are we so surprised that this judgment happened at such a critical time of the infancy / early development of the Church? We should be surprised that God delays judgment in our day. What is our greatest fear? Not of breaking His commandment but of being found out.

2) Persistantly Obeying God vs 12-42

Healing in Jesus Name vs 12 - 16

- Act 5:12 At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico.
- Act 5:13 But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem.
- In contrast to the first 11 verses, Luke stresses that while the account of Ananias and Sapphira displayed a terminal judgment, God manifested wonderful grace among the people as well.
 - A distinction was evident between believers and non-believers.
- Act 5:14 And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to {their number,}
- 1st it was 3000, 2nd it was 5000, NOW it was multitudes.
- Act 5:15 to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them.
- This was an ancient belief of a blessing imparted by a holy man's shadow touching a person. It doesn't say that people were actually healed. Some may have been. But this speaks more of how people

esteemed Peter.

Act 5:16 Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.

- The Church is growing. Multitudes are added. What was it that the Holy Spirit was doing through the early church that multitudes came to believe.
 - They were **among the people** (vs12)
 - They demonstrated compassion toward unbelievers in their needs (Healings)
 - They preached Jesus (vs 25 + 28)
- The signs and wonders were powerful confirmations that the Gospel preached were of God. The Gospel as well as the teachings of the apostles are not discerned with man's wisdom but they are Spiritually discerned. Signs and wonders cause man to refocus and be attentive to spiritual things, thus possibly to discern the gospel and the apostles teachings.
- 1 Corinthians 2:4-7 *"And my speech and my preaching [was] not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:\ But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, [even] the hidden [wisdom], which God ordained before the world unto our glory:"*
- 1 Corinthians 2:13+14 *"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned."*

Arrest and Liberation of the Apostles vs 17 - 24

Act 5:17 But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy.

Act 5:18 They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail.

Act 5:19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said,

Act 5:20 "Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life."

- As the pattern goes throughout the book of Acts, the Lord is doing a wonderful work through the church, but like clockwork, opposition arises against what the Lord is doing.
- Luke points out that it was High Priest with the Sadducees who had them arrested.
 - The Sadducees were the Deists of the day
 - They believed in a Supreme Being - Jehovah
 - They believe God created the universe but is not involved in the affairs of men on a day to day basis.
 - They do not believe in miracles, resurrection or angels. (Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-38)
 - Deists do not believe in divine revelation through holy books. (Bible)
 - They believe the greatest gift God gave mankind is reason.
 - Modern Deists are found in Unitarian Churches.
 - Jesus included the Sadducees when He called the religious leaders "hypocrites" or a "brood of vipers" (Matt 3:7; Matt 16:1-4; Matt 22:23)
- Notice the humor of God. God uses what the Sadducees don't believe in to free the apostles
- Details are not given at this point, but in verse 23 we see that the doors were locked and the guards were at the door. Truly, God intervened with a miracle on the apostles' behalf using an angel.
- The instruction from the angel
 - GO - Don't retreat. No time to lick your wounds. Get going.
 - STAND - To be positioned upright. To take a position/opinion. To be on display. To remain steadfast/immovable
 - SPEAK - "The Whole" not parts "message of this Life"
John 3:36 says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."
John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

- Act 5:21 Upon hearing {this,} they entered into the temple about daybreak and {began} to teach. Now when the high priest and his associates came, they called the Council together, even all the Senate of the sons of Israel, and sent {orders} to the prison house for them to be brought.
- Act 5:22 But the officers who came did not find them in the prison; and they returned and reported back,
- Act 5:23 saying, "We found the prison house locked quite securely and the guards standing at the doors; but when we had opened up, we found no one inside."
- The Apostles early went persistently and quickly obeying the angel
 - The Council came together to judge the Apostles and sent for the prisoners. But they were gone. When the officers went to get them the doors were still locked, the guards were still at the door yet the Apostles were not in jail.
- Act 5:24 Now when the captain of the temple {guard} and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them as to what would come of this.

Peters Testimony to the Council's Charge vs 25 - 33

- Act 5:25 But someone came and reported to them, "The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"
- Act 5:26 Then the captain went along with the officers and {proceeded} to bring them {back} without violence (for they were afraid of the people, that they might be stoned).
- News that the Apostles were back at it and they officers went to get them back
 - The officers knew that the people showed favor towards these apostles and were concerned that taking the apostles with a show of force and strength could cause a riot.
 - The apostles peaceably went with the officers.
 - As we see here Peter defend their action of disobedience to the Council's authority, it is very important to notice that they did not fight the consequences of their decision. They obeyed God rather than man, but accepted the consequences of that decision.
- Act 5:27 When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them,
- Act 5:28 saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."
- Notice their questions. They did not ask, How did you get out of prison? The did not ask, How do you do all these healings?
 - They are opposed to a Name they were teaching.
 - They were concerned that they would look guilty of the shed blood of Jesus.
 - They forgot that in **Matthew 27:25**, when asking for Barabbas they said, "*His blood [be] on us, and on our children.*"
- Act 5:29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men.
- WE MUST - If you were in prison and an angel came and miraculously let you out, and told you to go preach Jesus what would you do? EXACTLY THAT!
 - Well that EXACTLY DID HAPPEN. You were in prison to sin and death and more than an angel let you out and did commission you to preach Jesus. What will you do?
 - We spend out time talking about civil disobedience, should we or shouldn't we and yet we are not even obeying God in the first place. Let's not make this too difficult here. Just obey God.
- Act 5:30 "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom **you** had put to death by hanging Him on a cross.
- Three things that will infuriate the Council and the Sadducees
 - Jesus' Name
 - The Resurrection
 - Your Guilt
 - Notice again Peter's boldness in contrast with his failure at Jesus arrest. The difference is the Holy Spirit in his life.

- Act 5:31 "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.
- Verse 30 Peter pointed out their guiltiness (could cause anger, or sorrow)
 - After that is pointed out, Peter explains the Gospel / Grace
 - It is important to see that Peter associated repentance with forgiveness.
- Act 5:32 "And we are witnesses of these things; and {so is} the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."
- Is the Holy Spirit given to every man? No but to those who obey Him.
 - Obey Him in His call to repentance.
- Act 5:33 But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and intended to kill them.
- They were cut to the quick
 - The true Gospel preached properly will cause a response or a reaction.
 - 1) Repentance and Forgiveness of sins
 - 2) Anger, Justification, and sometimes Retaliation.

Gamaliel Advise vs 34 - 42

- Act 5:34 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time.
- Acts 22:3 Paul was taught by Gamaliel
 - He was a Pharisee (believed in God's intervention, angels, resurrection)
 - The Talmud tells us that Gamaliel was the grandson of Hillel. (A great Rabbi of Israel)
 - The Mishnah called Gamaliel Rabban Rabbi = my teacher Rabban = our teacher (national spokesman)
 - The Mishnah also uses the term Nasi. Only 6 are listed. Gamaliel is one of them and the Nasi meant Prince. Not only was he a religious leader he influenced the nation politically.
- Act 5:35 And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you propose to do with these men.
- This very revered man tells the Council to BE CAREFUL!
 - He then states 2 examples: THEUDAS & JUDAS
- Act 5:36 "For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about four hundred men joined up with him. But he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.
- THEUDAS rose up to be somebody special but he was killed and the movement died
- Act 5:37 "After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away {some} people after him; he too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered.
- JUDAS of Galilee rose up but he died and nothing came of it.
- Act 5:38 "So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown;
- Act 5:39 but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God."
- IN THIS CASE it could be just as the last two examples BUT,
 - 10 different times the word "BUT" is used and every one of them something changed the course of the story. Again this "BUT" changes the direction of the Council because Gamaliel causes them to consider God.
 - Gamaliel is good but it didn't go far enough. He said if this is of God you will find yourself fighting against God. We comment Gamaliel for this, yet it was just good. It wasn't great.
 - It would have been great if he had said, "Guy listen. These men are correct. We crucified Jesus. He is the Messiah. We need to respond to this Gospel and repent of our sins and receive the forgiveness granted to us." THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN GREAT!

Act 5:40 They took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and {then} released them.

- The Council received Gamaliel limited wisdom and
 - flogged the apostles (they didn't fight against God by killing them but just flogging them)
 - charged the apostles again to not preach in Jesus Name
 - released them

Act 5:41 So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for {His} name.

Act 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus {as} the Christ.

- They rejoiced that they were considered worthy. To suffer shame. The emphasis was not that they suffered but that they were worthy of it.
- This rejoicing was in the presence of the Council. Imagine the Council's sense of failure in stopping these apostles.
- *Matthew 5:10-12 "Blessed [are] they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when [men] shall revile you, and persecute [you], and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great [is] your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."*
- And they persistently went back to work. Obeying God.
 - Preaching is for the lost (generally)
 - Teaching is for the believers (generally)

**Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible[®],
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973,
1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)**